

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

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TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
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AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
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AMEMBASSY DAKAR
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AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING, MARCH 21, 1978

FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE NOON
BRIEFING, MARCH 21, 1978:

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON THE STATE OF CUBAN ACTIVITY

IN ETHIOPIA?

A: NO, NOTHING MORE THAN WE HAD YESTERDAY AND I THINK FRIDAY. I THINK YOU ASKED ME THE ERITREA QUESTION YESTERDAY --

A: AND I'M NOT SURE I REALLY REPLIED TO THAT. BUT WE ARE STILL WHERE WE WERE -- THAT IS TO SAY, WE KNOW THAT THE CUBANS ARE THERE. WE DON'T KNOW WHETHER THEY'RE ENGAGED IN ANY KIND OF COMBAT ROLE.

Q: YOU KNOW THE CUBANS ARE IN ERITREA?

A: YES. I THINK WE SAID THAT BEFORE.

Q: I DIDN'T KNOW THAT YOU HAD SAID THAT ON THE RECORD. ARE YOU SPEAKING NOW OF CUBAN TROOPS OR CUBAN MILITARY ADVISERS --

A: ADVISERS.

Q: DO YOU KNOW -- WHAT WE'RE ASKING HERE, OF COURSE, IS WHETHER ANY CUBAN TROOPS WITHIN THE OGADEN HAVE MOVED UNCLASSIFIED

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TO ERITREA, FROM U.S. KNOWLEDGE.

A: WE DON'T HAVE ANY KNOWLEDGE OF IT.

Q: NO SIGN OF CUBAN WITHDRAWALS. WHAT ABOUT REINFORCEMENTS?

A: NOTHING MORE THAN WE HAVE BEFORE.

Q: YOU HAVE NOTHING ON SHIPS TURNING AROUND THAT WERE HEADED FOR ETHIOPIA OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT?

A: NO.

Q: YOU CAN'T SAY 13,000 AND GROWING -- OR IS IT JUST 13,000, AS YOU WERE YESTERDAY?

A: I CAN SAY JUST WHAT I SAID YESTERDAY -- 13,000, OR A LITTLE MORE.

Q: JOHN, IS THERE AN EFFORT NOW TO MAKE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE RESULTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S AND THE SECRETARY'S APPEALS TO THE RUSSIANS AND THE CUBANS? THERE WAS AN EXPECTATION, I THINK, OF, IF NOT WITHDRAWALS -- AT LEAST, THAT THE CUBANS AND RUSSIANS WOULD STOP SUPPLYING AND REINFORCING THEIR TROOPS THERE.

A: NO, I'M NOT IN A POSITION TO ASSESS THAT TODAY.

Q: IS THERE AN EFFORT TO SEE WHETHER ANYTHING HAPPENED
-- WHETHER WHAT YOU WERE EXPECTING IS COMING, IS GOING TO
HAPPEN IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

A: WELL, IF BY "EFFORT" YOU MEAN ARE WE WATCHING THE
SITUATION AND ARE WE TALKING TO PEOPLE, THE ANSWER IN BOTH
CASES IS YES.
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Q: AND IN THESE TALKS, IS THERE ANY REASON TO
BELIEVE THAT THE PRESIDENT'S POLICY IS HAVING A GOOD
RESULT?

A: I DON'T HAVE ANY EVIDENCE THAT ANYTHING HAS CHANGED
FROM WHAT WE SAID BEFORE, WHICH IS A COUPLE OF DAYS
AGO.

Q: JOHN, THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS OF BUILDUP OF SOVIET
AND CUBAN FORCES IN MOZAMBIQUE, INCLUDING -- SOME ARE
35 AND SOME 21S -- DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THOSE
REPORTS? (SIC)

A: NO, I DON'T HAVE ANY COMMENT OTHER THAN TO SAY THAT
WE HAVE -- AS FAR AS WE KNOW THERE IS NO SUBSTANCE TO
THEM -- FOR THE PAST FEW MONTHS THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS
NOW AND THEN, CLAIMING THAT SOVIETS AND CUBANS ARE
DEVELOPING MILITARY FACILITIES IN MOZAMBIQUE BUT AS
FAR AS WE KNOW THERE IS NO SUBSTANCE TO THOSE, OR TO THE
LATEST ONE. SO I CAN'T REALLY CONFIRM A THING ON THAT.

Q: WELL YOU ARE DENYING THE REPORT, AREN'T YOU?

A: YES. I AM SAYING THAT AS FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED,
IT'S NOT HAPPENING.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING BACK FROM THE MOOSE DELEGATION?

A: WELL AS NOTED EARLIER, MURREY, WE ARE NOT GOING TO
HAVE ANYTHING EXTENSIVE TO SAY UNTIL HE GETS BACK. HE
WILL BE STOPPING FOR A DAY IN SAUDI ARABIA, AND I THINK
HE IS NOW EXPECTED TO BE BACK -- PROBABLY FRIDAY OF THIS
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WEEK.

Q: RIYADH, OR JIDDA?

A: I THINK IT'S JIDDA.

Q: JOHN, AMBASSADOR YOUNG, WHO LEFT FOR ZAMBIA AND TANZANIA -- IS THAT IN CONNECTION WITH THE ATTEMPT TO GET ALL THE RHODESIANS TOGETHER?

AND WILL HE TALK TO ANY OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT PEOPLE WHILE HE IS IN ZAMBIA?

A: HE IS GOING TO LUSAKA TO, I THINK, ATTEND A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL FOR NAMIBIA; AND WHILE HE IS IN THAT PART OF THE WORLD, IN THAT PART OF AFRICA, HE WILL TRY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS PRESENCE TO TALK WITH AFRICAN LEADERS ABOUT RHODESIA.

AND I THINK TODAY, HE IS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT NYERERE, OF TANZANIA, AS AN EXAMPLE OF THAT.

Q: DO YOU KNOW, IS HE BY ANY CHANCE -- SOUNDING OUT THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS ON THE POSSIBILITY OF SUPPORTING THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT RATHER THAN INSISTING ON THE

ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN?

A: I DON'T KNOW FOR A FACT, DICK, BUT I THINK IT'S QUITE LIKELY HE IS TALKING -- AND THOSE THAT HE WILL TALK TO, THAT SUBJECT WILL COME UP. MAYBE NOT IN THE WAY YOU HAVE PHRASED IT, BUT HE CERTAINLY WILL BE FINDING OUT WHAT THEIR VIEWS ARE ON THE WHOLE THING.

Q: HE IS IN TANZANIA NOW. I SEE. AND HE WILL SET OFF TOMORROW?
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A: AND HE WILL BE THERE UNTIL TOMORROW, WHEN HE GOES TO LUSAKA.

AND THE REST OF HIS TRIP IS NOT YET IN FINAL SHAPE. I DON'T KNOW WHEN HE GETS BACK HERE.

Q: WELL, DOES THE ADMINISTRATION HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE INSTALLATION OF THE FIRST OFFICIALS UNDER THE INTERIM SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA?

A: MURREY, YES, I HAVE A WORD OR TWO ON THAT. OUR REACTION, REALLY TO THAT, IS AS IT HAS BEEN IN THE PREVIOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS ON THE ARRANGEMENTS THAT WERE REACHED IN SALISBURY.

THIS, THE REPORTS OF THE SWEARING IN OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT IN SALISBURY, IS ANOTHER STAGE IN THE PROCESS OF POLITICAL CHANGE IN RHODESIA AND AS FAR AS WE CAN SEE NOW, "CRUCIAL" QUESTIONS REMAIN UNRESOLVED, RELATING TO THE EXERCISE OF AUTHORITY BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND WHETHER

THE AGREEMENT AS A WHOLE PROVIDES FOR A GENUINE TRANSFER OF POWER; AND WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE KEY DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES PROVIDING FOR A GENUINE TRANSFER OF POWER TO THE MAJORITY WITH THE PROTECTION OF EVERYBODY'S RIGHTS, AND WHICH WERE PART OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS, OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A LASTING SETTLEMENT.

AND I WILL JUST MAKE TWO OTHER POINTS HERE:

ONE IMPORTANT GOAL IS TO END THE FIGHTING AND, TRAGICALLY ENOUGH THAT IS INCREASING AND SPREADING INTO NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES -- AS SEEN IN THE RECENT RHODESIAN ATTACKS IN UNCLASSIFIED

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BOTSWANA AND ZAMBIA.

NOW WE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK WITH ALL THE PARTIES, BOTH THOSE IN SALISBURY AND THOSE OUTSIDE OF THE COUNTRY, TO PROMOTE AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT THAT WILL GUARANTEE THE IRREVERSIBILITY AND FAIRNESS OF THE PROCESS LEADING TO MAJORITY RULE AND INDEPENDENCE.

Q: JOHN, WHEN YOU RAISE THE QUESTION ABOUT A "GENUINE TRANSFER OF POWER" WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

A: WELL, I HESITATE TO GO INTO THIS IN ANY GREAT DETAIL, DICK.

Q: ARE WE TALKING ABOUT POLITICAL POWER?

A: WE ARE TALKING ABOUT POLITICAL POWER, AS WE SEE IT IN WHAT WE KNOW OF THE SALISBURY ARRANGEMENT. I THINK THAT'S WHAT THAT REFERS TO REALLY. I REALLY DON'T WANT TO GET INTO IT BEYOND THAT.

Q: WELL THEN, ARE YOU SAYING THAT FROM WHAT YOU KNOW, THE SALISBURY ARRANGEMENT DOES NOT PROVIDE FOR A GENUINE TRANSFER OF POWER?

A: IN THE LANGUAGE OF THIS MATERIAL HERE IT'S A CRUCIAL QUESTION THAT REMAINS UNRESOLVED. WE QUESTION THE -- WHETHER THERE IS A GENUINE TRANSFER OF POWER.

Q: WELL WHAT I AM ASKING -- HOW DOES IT REMAIN UNRESOLVED, THEN? I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

A: WELL I THINK I REALLY DON'T WANT TO DISCUSS THIS AT ANY GREAT LENGTH BECAUSE --

FOR ONE REASON, WE KNOW STILL INCOMPLETELY ABOUT THE ARRANGE UNCLASSIFIED

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MENTS.

BUT I THINK THE PROVISION FOR VOTING WITHIN THE PARLIAMENT -- "PROVISION FOR SEATS", I SHOULD SAY, IT MAKES IT A LITTLE CLEARER -- IS AT THE HEART OF IT, OR OF THAT PARTICULAR CONCERN.

Q: ARE YOU SAYING YOU DISAPPROVE OF THE ARRANGEMENT THAT WAS NEGOTIATED BETWEEN THE PARTIES?

A: NO. I AM GOING TO STAY WITH WHAT I HAVE SAID -- THAT IT IS A CRUCIAL QUESTION THAT REMAINS UNRESOLVED.

Q: IT IS RESOLVED. THE WHITES GET 28 SEATS OUT OF 100.

A: ALL RIGHT, YOU ARE SAYING, YES, THEY REACHED A SETTLEMENT.

Q: NOW IN THE AMERICAN VIEW IS THAT FAIR, OR UNFAIR?

A: IN THE AMERICAN VIEW IT LEAVES UNCLEAR WHETHER THE TRANSFER OF POWER IS GENUINE -- AND I REALLY AM NOT GOING TO GET DRAWN ON THIS, BEYOND THAT, GEORGE. I REALLY THINK I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO DO IT.

Q: WHEN DOES IT BECOME GENUINE, AND WHO IS TO JUDGE THAT?

A: I THINK WE HAVE BEEN THROUGH ALL THAT BEFORE. I CAN'T GIVE YOU A DATE WHEN IT'S GOING TO BECOME GENUINE. WE HAVE SAID THAT WE THINK A SETTLEMENT SHOULD INCLUDE ALL OF THE PARTIES, ALL OF THE POINTS OF VIEW, ALL OF THE MAJOR FACTIONS THAT ARE AT ISSUE HERE. WHEN THAT HAPPENS, I CAN'T TELL YOU.
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BUT WE WOULD HOPE THAT ALL OF THE VOICES IN THIS SITUATION CAN BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

Q: THERE WERE STORIES OVER THE WEEKEND THAT MUZOREWA WAS WELCOMED BY 150,000 PEOPLE. I DON'T KNOW WHETHER IT WAS STAGED OR NOT, BUT THAT SEEMS TO BE MORE THAN JUST ONE FACTION OF MANY IN RHODESIA.

A: I NOTE THAT.

Q: DOESN'T THAT TELL YOU ANYTHING?

A: OF COURSE. IT TELLS ME THAT THE BISHOP HAS CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT INSIDE THE COUNTRY. BUT I DON'T THINK THAT THAT SPEAKS TO, OR GOES TO WHAT I AM SAYING -- WHICH IS THAT WE

FEEL THAT A SETTLEMENT PROVIDING FOR GENUINE TRANSFER OF POWER, GENUINE MAJORITY RULE, IS SOMETHING THAT WE HOPE WILL EMERGE -- AND WE HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT WE KNOW OF THE SETTLEMENT THAT WAS REACHED IN SALISBURY.

Q: JOHN, IT IS PRESUMED FROM THE SILENCE, WE ARE SUPPOSED TO DRAW THE CONCLUSION THAT THE TALKS THAT WERE HELD IN SOUTH AFRICA WERE UNPRODUCTIVE?

A: NO, I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD CONCLUDE THAT.

Q: WHAT SHOULD WE CONCLUDE? WILL YOU HELP OUR CONCLUSION?

A: WELL THE SIMPLE CONCLUSION IS THAT I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO GIVE YOU RIGHT NOW ON THAT.

Q: IS THIS BUSINESS ABOUT THE "SEATS" BEING A POINT NEW? THE ADMINISTRATION HAS MADE A WHOLE SERIES OF STATEMENTS ABOUT THE SETTLEMENTS, AND ADMINISTRATION FIGURES HAVE DISCUSSED IT PRIVATELY AD NAUSEUM, AND NOBODY HAS EVER UNCLASSIFIED

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MENTIONED "SEATS" BEFORE. IT'S ALWAYS BEEN A TRANSFER -- IT'S ALWAYS BEEN THE SUSPICION THAT THE MILITARY AND POLICE POWER WOULD STAY IN SMITH'S HANDS DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD -- AND ON INTO THE LATER PERIOD THERE HAS BEEN A HANGUP -- BUT NEVER IN SEATS.

I MEAN -- IS THIS A NEW BUSINESS HERE?

A: NO, I DON'T THINK IT'S PARTICULARLY NEW, NO.

Q: DO YOU EXPECT THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION TO BE CLARIFIED IN ADVANCE OF THE PRESIDENT'S DEPARTURE FOR AFRICA?

A: MURREY, I DON'T KNOW. POSITION ON WHAT -- ON THE SALISBURY -- ?

Q: ON THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF PLAY. YES, THE ADMINISTRATION HAS EXPRESSED ITS DISPLEASURE WITH WHAT IS HAPPENING -- AND WHAT IS HAPPENING EVIDENTLY IS PROCEEDING -- AND THE PRESIDENT PRESUMABLY WILL BE GOING TO AFRICA AT A POINT IN WHICH THIS SITUATION IS STILL PROCEEDING CONTRARY TO THE ADMINISTRATION'S --

A: WELL, THERE IS NO WAY I CAN TELL YOU WHETHER WE ARE GOING TO CLARIFY OR POSTULATE FURTHER ON THIS BEFORE HE

GOES. I JUST DON'T KNOW.

Q: JOHN, A RELATED QUESTION: WAS THERE A MAJOR URGENT

REASON FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG TO GO TO AFRICA AT THIS POINT?

A: NO, I DON'T THINK THERE IS A "MAJOR URGENT REASON."
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NAMIBIA IS SOMETHING WHERE WE ARE, OF COURSE, QUITE INTERESTED IN AND INVOLVED WITH.

Q: JOHN, ON NAMIBIA, THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS HAS BEEN MAKING A CERTAIN AMOUNT OUT OF A STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO SAM NUJOMA, THE LEADER OF THE SWAPO, TO THE EFFECT THAT HE HAS NO INTEREST IN MAJORITY RULE IN NAMIBIA. HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO VERIFY THAT STATEMENT?

A: I DON'T KNOW THAT WE POSTED IT OR GOT IT HERE, BUT THERE IS SOMETHING ON THAT WHICH I WILL HAVE TO GET FOR YOU. I DON'T HAVE IT WITH ME HERE. VANCE

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